



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER
NANCY FLOREEN

**Testimony of Montgomery County Councilmember
Nancy Floreen
Transit Funding Study
Steering Committee Hearing November 29, 2006**

Secretary Flanagan, Members of the Transit Funding Steering Committee

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you on this very critical issue. For the record, I am Nancy Floreen, a member of the Montgomery County Council and Chair of the Council's Transportation and Environment Committee.

I would like to be sitting here today believing that the train was at least ready to leave the station, but, unfortunately, we need so much more work to make transit the efficient, reliable, comfortable transportation mode it must be to get people out of their cars.

This Steering Committee is a very encouraging sign that the State acknowledges the crisis we have on our roadways. Your task – to offer options for finding the critically needed revenue for transit – indicates the State's recognition that public transportation is the essential piece to solve the transportation puzzle.

Montgomery County has recognized this for a long time. The County has continually made hard budget decisions to increase and improve transit. Here are but a few examples:

- ❑ \$50.3 million this year to operate our RideOn bus service

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- ❑ \$18.7 million to build a second Glenmont Metro Garage, adding 1,200 spaces for transit users. On November 28th we even appropriated an additional \$5.28 million more to cover cost increases.
- ❑ \$2 million for the Takoma Langley Transit Center
- ❑ \$11 million to improve the safety of, amenities at, and access to County bus stops to encourage more ridership
- ❑ And let me not forget the \$6.2 million we contributed to the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit Center in Silver Spring;
- ❑ And the Council's recent initiative to program funds to accelerate State and WMATA capital projects including \$5 million for WMATA to design the southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station, which is a first step towards the Purple Line.

Our RideOn system is the largest locally run bus system in Maryland, carrying more than 90,000 passengers a day and growing 8% annually— why - because we have committed to spending the funds necessary to keep transit use growing and constantly improving. And I was just informed that RideOn is the 50th largest bus system in the entire USA.

Our support for the State to build and operate the Corridor Cities Transitway and the Bi-County Transitway is unwavering. These two major projects are critical to relieve our congestion problems, both east-west and north-south. County roads are reaching crisis status, and I remind you they are filled with and affecting the daily lives of not only Montgomery residents but those from 6 other Maryland counties.

I give you all this information to highlight that we have chosen to channel significant revenue and attention to public transit, and we need the state to do the same.

The significant transit needs in our area won't come cheaply. Building these lines will take about \$3 billion in State and Federal funds. In addition, Metro is in desperate need of a lot more funding, and it is important to remember that Maryland Metro users come from areas outside of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties –more than 14% come from Howard, Frederick, Charles, and Anne Arundel Counties.

Your Committee is shouldering a monumental responsibility. We have been offered a window of opportunity with the Davis Bill, and we can't afford to shut that window. Even if it doesn't get through the lame duck Congress, Rep. Davis will be reintroducing it.

Transit funding must be significantly increased for the sake of our commuters and our environment. This Steering Committee is tasked with finding sources of funding for transit. I know you can do it. Our commuters deserve no less.